



MUMBAI

American Center Bulletin

JANUARY
2007

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.



If I can help somebody as I pass along,
If I can cheer somebody with a word or song,
If I can show somebody he's traveling wrong,
Then my living will not be in vain.

If I can do my duty as a Christian ought,
If I can bring salvation to a world once wrought,
If I can spread the message as the master taught,
Then my living will not be in vain.

(Excerpted from Dr. Martin Luther King's speech, "The Drum Major Instinct")

Americans Celebrate the Achievements of Martin Luther King, Jr.

On the third Monday of every January, Americans honor the life and achievements of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., (1929-1968), the 1964 Nobel Peace laureate and the individual most associated with the triumphs of the African-American civil rights movement during the 1950s and 1960s. As a political organizer, supremely skilled orator and advocate of nonviolent protest, King was pivotal in persuading his fellow Americans to end the legal segregation that prevailed throughout the South and parts of other regions, and in sparking support for the civil rights legislation that established the legal framework for racial equality in the United States.

Son of the prominent Atlanta pastor Martin Luther King, Sr., King, Jr. completed a doctorate in theology at Boston University at the age of 26. In 1954, while completing his dissertation, King accepted the pastorate at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama. It was in Montgomery the following year that Rosa Parks, an African-American seamstress, was jailed for refusing to give up her seat on a segregated municipal bus to a white passenger. The incident sparked the Montgomery Bus Boycott, in which the city's African-Americans refused to patronize its segregated bus system. King led the organization directing the boycott and became the movement's public face, appealing to white Americans' spirit of brotherhood. When the federal courts, following the reasoning of the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, declared the bus segregation law unconstitutional, King emerged as a national figure.

In 1957, King was among the founders of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). This was an alliance of black ministers and churches organized to pursue nonviolent direct action against segregation. SCLC leaders hoped to change public opinion and to complement the legal challenges to segregation pursued by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). King was a dynamic force within the SCLC, emerging as its leading fund-raiser and as a skillful political tactician who successfully forged alliances with sympathetic Northern whites. In 1959, King traveled to India, where he met with followers of Gandhi and further refined his thought on nonviolent social protest.

During the early 1960s, King and the SCLC initiated a number of peaceful protests against segregated institutions. In May 1963, Birmingham, Alabama Police Commissioner Eugene "Bull" Connor unleashed police dogs and high-pressure fire hoses against peaceful demonstrators, many of them schoolchildren. The images horrified the nation. King was arrested during these demonstrations and from his jail cell produced *Letter From a Birmingham Jail*, in which he argued that one who breaks an unjust law to arouse the consciousness of his community "is in reality expressing the highest respect for law," provided he acts "openly, lovingly and with a willingness to accept the penalty." That August, African-American leaders organized the March On Washington For Jobs and Freedom. Here, before an estimated quarter of a million civil rights supporters gathered at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, King offered one of the most powerful orations in American

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HOLIDAYS

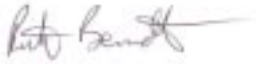
January 1: New Year's Day
January 15: Martin Luther King's Birthday
January 26: Republic Day
January 30: Muharrum

A WORD FROM THE CENTER

Before his famous sit-in demonstrations, and well before the iconic “I Have a Dream” speech, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., spent some time in India. He traveled as a guest of Prime Minister Nehru, but it wasn’t a high-level visit of meetings and receptions; Dr. King made his journey to study and learn more about Gandhian philosophy and the techniques of nonviolence.

In the turbulent nine years between his visit to India and his murder in 1968, Dr. King’s adherence to nonviolence guided a nation through a difficult and dramatic transformation. The racially-motivated conflicts that claimed lives in cities such as Los Angeles, Newark, and Detroit during the civil rights period are unqualified tragedies. Without the benefit of hindsight, it must have seemed expedient and even justified at the time to advocate violence to achieve political ends. And yet, Dr. King held fast to his principles, keeping an untold number of people from harm, and institutionalizing peaceful methods of redressing inequality.

Indo-American relations are prominently in the news these days, and rightfully celebrated for their closeness. But it would be unfortunate if all the attention to recent events caused us to forget that there’s actually a long history of mutually-beneficial dialogue and exchange between the two countries, and that racial harmony in the U.S. in 2007 owes much to the India of 1959.



Ruth Bennett
Deputy Director

WELCOME



Kristina Dunne is the newest member of the Public Diplomacy Office and will serve as the Assistant Cultural Affairs Officer. Prior assignments with the State Department include Lima, Peru, and Budapest, Hungary. Kristina graduated from the University of Arizona, Tucson and received a Master’s degree from the Garvin School of International Management (Thunderbird).

THE KING CENTER



Established in 1968 by Coretta Scott King, the King Center is the official, living memorial dedicated to the advancement of the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., leader of America’s greatest nonviolent movement for justice, equality and peace.

More than 650,000 visitors from all over the world are drawn annually to the King Center to pay homage to Dr. King, view unique exhibits illustrating his life and teachings and visit the King Center’s Library, Archives, his final resting place, his birth home, gift shop and other facilities. Located in Atlanta’s Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, the King Center utilizes diverse communications media, including books, audio and video cassettes, film, television, CDs and web pages, to reach out far beyond its physical boundaries to educate people all over the world about Dr. King’s life, work and his philosophy and methods of nonviolent conflict-reconciliation and social change.

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history. Generations of schoolchildren have learned by heart lines from the *I Have a Dream* speech, in which King prayed for the day when people would “not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.”

The images from Birmingham and Washington helped crystallize support for the Civil Rights Act of 1964, signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson on July 2, 1964. In 1965, the violent Selma, Alabama police response to a voting rights march sparked a similar surge in support for King, the civil rights movement and for legislation guaranteeing the right of political participation. Consequently, the Voting Rights Act became law on August 6, 1965.

With the passage of these civil rights laws, King continued to employ his strategy of nonviolent social protest even as some younger leaders at times argued for more radical means. King also broadened his agenda to encompass efforts to focus attention on African-American poverty. King was in Memphis, Tennessee, in support of a strike by black garbage workers when, on April 4, 1968, an assassin’s bullet cut him down at the age of 39.

Americans honor the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. with a national holiday celebrated on the third Monday of each January, and soon by a national monument, to be constructed in direct sight of the Lincoln Memorial, where King inspired Americans with his dreams of racial justice and equality. Countless individuals and organizations, including the King Center (see sidebar), in Atlanta, carry on his work.

Presidents, Celebrities Inaugurate Martin Luther King Memorial



An artist’s rendering of the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial.

Opera and gospel music stars sang, President George W. Bush and former President Clinton and four children gave speeches, poets read their lines and 75 people put shovels into the ground to inaugurate a memorial to civil rights hero Martin Luther King, Jr. in Washington’s front yard – the National Mall – on November 13, 2006.

President Bush said he was proud to dedicate the memorial in its “rightful place” – between monuments to Thomas Jefferson, who “declared the promise of America,” and Abraham Lincoln, “who defended the promise of America.” King, Bush said, “redeemed the promise of America.”

The new memorial, the first on the National Mall to honor an African-American, is scheduled to be completed in 2008 at the west end of the Tidal Basin that fronts the Jefferson Memorial.

In the summer of 1963, King delivered his famous *I Have a Dream* speech from the nearby steps of the Lincoln Memorial to more than 200,000 civil rights marchers gathered on the mall. That speech is considered by many to be one of the greatest speeches in American history. King’s daughter Yolanda recalled her father’s voice as “velvet,” but also commanding, as it called on America to make good its promises of freedom and justice for all citizens.

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The memorial will feature King's words, inscribed behind falling water and near a "stone of hope" reminiscent of a phrase in his speech in which King said his dream and his faith would allow the marchers to go back to the South and "hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope."

Excerpts from Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" Speech, Washington, D.C., August 28, 1963

"When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was the promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness....

"But there is something that I must say to my people, who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice. In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plain of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force; and the marvelous new militance, which has engulfed the Negro community, must not lead us to a distrust of all white people. For many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. And they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone. And as we talk, we must make a pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back....

"I say to you today, my friends, so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal. I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character....

"When we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all God's children, black men and white men, Jews and gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: 'Free at last. Free at last. Thank God Almighty, we are free at last'."

The American Center acknowledges the following web sites in compiling the essay on Martin Luther King, Jr.

http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/martin_luther_king_jr_day.html

<http://www.thekingcenter.org/tkc/index.asp>

<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=November&x=20061113170232berehellek0.1088983>

<http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/civilrts/excerpts.htm#15>

NOTES FROM THE AMERICAN LIBRARY

A Select Webliography on Martin Luther King, Jr.

<http://www.africanamericans.com/MLKjrSpeechMenu.htm>
AfricanAmericans.com – Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Speeches

<http://www.aclu.org/racialjustice/index.html>
American Civil Liberties Union – Racial Justice

<http://www.bcri.org/index.html>
Birmingham Civil Rights Institute

<http://www.crmvet.org/>
Civil Rights Movement Veterans

<http://www.mlkmemorial.org/>
Washington, D.C. Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial

<http://www.thekingcenter.org/>
The King Center

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aaohhtml/exhibit/>
Library of Congress – African American Odyssey

<http://www.lib.lsu.edu/hum/mlk/>
Louisiana State University Libraries, Baton Rouge – Martin Luther King, Jr. and Black History Month

<http://www.martinlutherking.org/>
Martin Luther King, Jr. – A True Historical Examination

<http://www.naacp.org/home/>
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

<http://www.civilrightsmuseum.org/>
National Civil Rights Museum

<http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/mlk/>
The Seattle Times – Martin Luther King, Jr. & the Civil Rights Movement

<http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/>
The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute at Stanford University

<http://www.usccr.gov/>
U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

http://usinfo.state.gov/scv/history_geography_and_population/civil_rights/martin_luther_king_jr.html
U. S. Department of State – Bureau of International Information Programs – Martin Luther King, Jr.

<http://www.nps.gov/malu/>
U.S. Department of the Interior – National Park Service – Martin Luther King, Jr.

<http://www.voicesofcivilrights.org/>
Voices of Civil Rights

Note: Internet sites included in this listing, other than those of the U.S. Government, should not be construed as an endorsement of the views contained therein.

MUMBAI MONDAYS

**A Discussion on
Character, Culture, and Stereotypes
led by Ruth Bennett**

Monday, January 22

American Center Auditorium

6:00 p.m.

The concept of “stereotypes” has left the empirical social sciences and entered the realm of management, political science, and everyday life. We all know we’re not supposed to use them, and some of us even claim not to – regardless of whether we raise similar objections to talking about “the Indian character” or “American culture.”

Is it possible to get rid of stereotypes – or even desirable? Is it meaningful to speak of a national character? This talk can’t and won’t settle the issues. What it will do is reexamine the role of stereotypes from a cognitive perspective, and offer a taste of what American experimental social/evolutionary psychology has to say both about human nature and why we perceive it the way that we do.

Ruth Bennett joined the Foreign Service in 2000, and has served at the U.S. Consulate General in Chiang Mai, Thailand; the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in New York City, New York; and the U.S. Embassy in London, United Kingdom. At the U.S. Consulate General in Mumbai, she is the Cultural Affairs Officer and Deputy Director of the American Center. Prior to joining the U.S. State Department, Ruth was a science writer for publications such as Science News magazine and the Oregonian newspaper, as well as an adjunct professor of psychology at the University of Oregon. She has a Bachelor’s degree in philosophy from Reed College in Portland, Oregon, and graduate degrees in journalism and psychology from the University of Oregon.

NASIK ROAD SHOW

The American Center and American Library in Mumbai are reaching out to the people of Nasik, in northern Maharashtra, through a road show from January 27-30, 2007, at Mahatmaphule Kaladaly and other venues. During this event, we will have available hundreds of books, periodicals, videos, DVDs and thematic posters on a wide range of topics. We will also be displaying a photo exhibit entitled “Picturing the Century.” Come join us for lectures, discussions and presentations by experts on issues such as multiculturalism, communication, American history, urban planning, and English-language learning. There will also be special presentations by Consulate colleagues about opportunities for U.S. higher education and about the U.S. visa process. The road show is presented in collaboration with the Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, H.P.T. and K.T.H.M. College in Nasik.

ALL ARE WELCOME

BOOK FAIR

The American Library is participating in the Fifth Mumbai International Book Fair, January 12 -21, 2007 on the Exhibition Grounds of the Grand Hyatt Hotel, Off Western Express Highway, Santacruz (East), Mumbai 400 055.

Please come and visit us there from 12 noon to 8:00 p.m.

FILMS THIS MONTH

CIVIL RIGHTS IN AMERICA

Friday, January 12

Rosewood (1997, color, 142 mins)

American Center Auditorium

3:30 and 6:30 p.m.

Friday, January 19

Separate But Equal (1991, color, 193 mins)

American Center Auditorium

3:00 and 6:30 p.m.



Drawing on a dark and little-known chapter in American history, director John Singleton (*Boyz n the Hood*) recounts the destruction of Rosewood, a thriving all-black town in rural Florida, in 1923 by an angry white mob from nearby communities after a white woman falsely claimed she was assaulted by a black man. Ving Rhames, Jon Voight, Don Cheadle, Michael Rooker and Esther Rolle star.

The year is 1950 ... and America is divided between black and white. Schools, restaurants, trains and buses ... even drinking fountains cannot be shared by both races. Although slavery has been outlawed for nearly a century, segregation is legal. But white and Negro facilities are separate and unequal ... and the tension has reached a breaking point for the Blacks of Clarendon County, South Carolina. When their request for a single school bus is denied by white school officials, a bitter, violent and courageous battle for justice and equality begins ... pitting black against white and friend against neighbor all across the country.



The dramatic events leading from a small rural classroom to the Supreme Court decision that outlawed segregation are powerfully reenacted in this contemporary screen classic, beautifully scripted and superbly portrayed by some of Hollywood’s finest actors. Sidney Poitier is Thurgood Marshall, the NAACP lawyer who took the struggle for equal rights to the highest court in the land. Burt Lancaster plays John W. Davis, the opposing counsel, and Richard Kiley is Chief Justice Earl Warren, who rallied the Court to the landmark ruling. Together they capture the complex emotional dynamics of one of this country’s most significant and inspiring achievements.

Admission to all American Center programs, restricted to persons over 16, will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Please bring the envelope containing this issue of the bulletin for admission (maximum two persons). The auditorium doors will open 30 minutes before the start of the program.

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